

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, 1876, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Mr. Alexander Graham Bell. Wyoming Territory, Between Bitter Creek and Salt Lake, Monday. My dear Alec:

Good morning to you. I hope all nature looks as bright and sunny to you as it does to us. Yesterday was such a disagreeable day we all waited anxiously to see what kind of day this would be, for today we pass through some of the finest scenery of America. Every now and then all last night I opened my curtain to assure myself the stars were really shining and I woke finally this morning to such a lovely scene, Snow all around, and the Crescent moon and bright morning star smiling pleasantly down upon us as if they knew how anxiously we had all waited for them and their assurance of a pleasant day. By and by the first yellow tints stretched across the horizon, growing gradually brighter and redder until the moon and stars faded out of sight and the snow hills around us were lighted up one after another with the delicate pink glow of the rising sun and finally the sun itself arose from behind the hills, and instantly the frost particles on the windows and on the grass blades shone and sparkled like bright diamonds. Little low bushes two or three inches high and covered with snow dotted the ground around and looked liked nothing so much as those big round lumps of white coral we saw at the Salem Museum, not the brain corals but the others with little flower-like protuberances. Here and there isolated blades of grass showed above the few inches deep snow all covered with a delicate net work of frost. We have left the broad snow plains behind us long ago and are now in the region of yellow tableland where no living thing can stay except the short bushes. Now and then huge rocks tower around us grand in their base leafless rigidity. Above them or in breaks between we catch glimpses of lovely distant snow mountains. The rocks around are all stratified and the huge summits of some are separated from the foundations by a deep

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strongly marked line, 2 and do not seem to belong together, It is just as if some mighty hand had set the immense rock down there at random.

We are stopping now at a coal station, and have come upon the first signs of life except the miserable little house that adjoins the wood stations. There are coal mines around, on the hills on my left I see smoke rising out from the hills, it is a mine or fire, nearer us smoke rises from some tall chimneys of manufacturing buildings, we have come to the first busy looking place for many a long mile but the houses are all of the poorest description and look temporary. There is no appearance of home about them as there was in even cold and dreary Lamarie. There the land is cultivable and settlers have made homes there, here the fetid water's make mans stay here one of necessity never of choice.

O how I wish you were here you would enjoy it all so much, the wild scene — not the living!!. Our party is reduced to it's usual size again except for the presence of Dr. — Superintendent of Mints of the United States.

When you write to your Mother please give her my love and tell her I want to write to her but cannot do so very well in the cars.

The houses of the miners are built in an abrupt ravine, the walls of which form one of the sides of their houses. The roofs and sometimes a window project above the surface of the ground — the roofs are covered with dried earth and clay, and the whole settlement has such a queer appearance. Just now a “heaten Chinee” passed us trudging laboriously along with a big piece of raw meat at one end of a long branch he carries over his shoulder and a heavy sack on the other end. We have come to the region of chinamen. The valley around us is so queer flat with sudden fissures running through it. The ground is covered with bunches of the sage, 3 -bush. Just now a pure white mountain rises up over the rock hills around us, sharp and white against the blue sky recalling the Jung'frau in it's shape and sharp stern purity. Rock Creek is the name of the mining station we have left, hills

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near us grow more and more peculiar in their formation at their base are rounded pillar-like protuberances.

I have just been on the rear platform while we moved through a wonderful canon. The hills all present that peculiar appearance I spoke of. You know the heavy round stone foundations they make to support piers for bridges. Well the hills all have formed foundations like that whole rows of them rising over one another gradually sloping and so beautifully smooth and rounded till you get to the top where from the smooth earth springs suddenly upward huge rough blocks of red sand stone, passing now a range of distant blue mountains on the tips and valleys of which the snow lies everlastingly. Now again in the region of flats, at Green River, we saw the rounded terraced hills in all their grandeur. Their color is so queer, they are all stratified and the strada (?) is of different colors and strongly marked, the terraces grey and the precipices, cliffs crowning them greyish and deep redish.

Papa wants me to finish my letter now. We have left the hills behind and are again on the flat tableland. We reach Salt Lake City tonight and spend the night there, and all tomorrow. I shall write to you from there. I wonder when I shall hear from you. Are you getting along well in your work and is the telephone ready for use, and have you had any more offers or letters from great men and have you written to Sir William, I wish you would if you haven't. How many pupils have you now? I hope you do not work yourself all out. Have you heard anything of your patents and how do you like Mrs. Rogers and how do his experiments to test your theory proceed.

What are you doing and thinking of, I want to know everything about you dear. What news do you have from Canada?

With ever so much love, ever your, May. P.S. Passing now a row of the pillar-like formations, Only one terrace and the top looks as if a knife had passed over it, like a bread knife over a loaf It is quite as suddenly smooth and the same height all along the row. Now

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do you like my geographical descriptions? Have had a Champagne lunch on board car. Our car meals consist of dry rolls, special meat ,cold tongue, preserves and champagne or ale and was made by Sister's "lily hands" assisted by Sir Knight Kraft. The redoubtable Knight is a little man with face covered with smallpox marks. German "blattern" can't remember English name. He is very devoted to Sister and her alone.